

Working Group 1-Peace Disarmament and Cooperation

Preparatory Meeting on November 30, 2020

A Contribution to the Debate by Frederico Carvalho

The path towards a world of peace, disarmament and cooperation has never been an easy one. We believe that path has consistently narrowed in recent years. Monopoly capitalism associated with imperialism is the main cause of instability leading to war and a continued aggravation of inequality in the distribution of wealth created by human labor. One aspect that deserves particular attention is the fact that in the so-called “democracies” where that system prevails, political initiative and decision making is not effectively exerted by governments elected by the people. Actually they are determined by the *de facto* power holders in command of financial and economic interests. This state of affairs may be artfully disguised by carrying out an election whose result is largely non-significant as far as the future political course is concerned.

Getting down to the recent presidential election in the USA one may ask whether and how it may influence the future foreign policy of that great power. This is of considerable importance given the role played by the US in a variety of traumatic events that have shaken and continue to shake the planet. In this respect it is of interest to consider opinions expressed by a few observers.

Thus, in the opinion of Tom Fowdyⁱ, “Make America Great Again” (D, Trump) becomes “America is Back” (J. Biden). In fact (quote) “(...) *America never really went away. Trump was not a coincidence, an accident or a mere mistake, he was a physical manifestation of what America truly is and a continuation of what it has always done, albeit in a blunt and unpleasant package.*

Biden is not such a contemptible individual, but he merely represents America with a ‘mask on,’ a kinder and more humane version of the same thing, the same America which has waged war and caused chaos around the world (...)”. As Obama did and George W. Bush before him. Neither dared to constrain in any way financially or otherwise the military/security complex demands. Rather the opposite. Obama agreed to a trillion dollar increase in nuclear weapons spending, and the military/security complex means to get that money.

The American economist Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, formerly Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in Ronald Reagan’s Administration, writes in a recent article (quote) “*The military/security complex makes certain that no moves toward peace can succeed. Its lobbyists have succeeded in undoing all the arms control agreements reached with Russia since the 1960s.*”ⁱⁱ On the future of the NEW START due to expire in February 2021, Dr. Roberts notes that (quote) “*Russia’s President Putin has made repeated offers to extend the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty, but Washington has rejected his offer out of hand.*” The prospects of reaching a deal in this matter appear dim. In fact the US has been reluctant to extend the agreement without a set of preconditions that stand few chances of being accepted by the Russian Federation.

*“The demands Washington put forward during various rounds of negotiations with Russia involved dragging China into the deal – something that Beijing has been staunchly opposed to. The US has also insisted that the UK and France – America’s NATO allies – must be kept out of the deal, as well as the NATO nuclear arsenal in Europe. Russia’s tactical nuclear weapons, however, were proposed for inclusion.”*ⁱⁱⁱ

The US withdrawal from the ABM treaty in 2002, decided by George W. Bush, led to the development of a series of technologically new missile systems by the Russian side. This

was justified by Vladimir Putin in an address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in March 2018 has a response to the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. That development appears to have been used as an excuse for the American withdrawal from the INF Treaty effective on August 2, 2019. This step was taken under the Administration of Donald Trump who had Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State. In fact it appears that discontent with the Treaty dated back to the Obama's presidency. It is worth noting that the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was the first time in recent history that the United States has withdrawn from a major international arms treaty. This led to the eventual creation of the American Missile Defense Agency in 2002.

The arms race towards enhanced missile technology goes on. Recently it became public that the U.S. Navy has shot down an intercontinental ballistic missile over the Pacific Ocean with an SM-3 Block IIA missile in what was described as a milestone test that demonstrated a potential scheme to defend Hawaii. ^{iv} This was described as a test of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System. The Russian side had long shown concerns about the possible land deployment of such an ABM interceptor system in European soil.

“Previously, the Aegis weapons system had been advertised by the US as being limited against short- and intermediate-range missile threats. This reasoning was cited by both US and NATO officials as a counter to long-standing Russian concerns that the Aegis Ashore missile defense systems installed in Romania and Poland represented a threat to Russian strategic missile capabilities. The shooting down of an ICBM-like target by the Aegis BMD System has shown that Russia's concerns were, in fact, well grounded.”^v

We are here following a dangerous path that will not facilitate, rather decrease the odds, of a possible extension of NEW START. It will also increase the danger of nuclear war started by the definitive exclusion of an agreement on a “no-first strike” posture.

In this dark scenery a light of hope is shining: the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. A long and hard way lies ahead of all peace-loving women and men as well as a wide range of organizations that fight for the cause of Peace.

In a recent article in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists entitled *“Taking the Nuclear Ban Treaty Forward”* Professor Zia Mian reasons on the ways “For promoting global peace and nuclear disarmament particularly in South Asia, through academic research, public speaking, technical and popular writing and organizing efforts to ban nuclear weapons.”

It is an important article on ways and means to contribute to take the NBT forward as the title of the article reads. Several of his suggestions on the role that scientific workers may play in efforts to achieve that goal are of particular interest.^{vi} The article is part of a collection to mark the occasion of the entry into force of the Treaty. It is a must-read.

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ⁱ Tom Fowdy, is a British writer and analyst of politics and international relations with a primary focus on East Asia
<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/507883-biden-america-continue-cause-chaos/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.paulcraigroberts.org/2020/10/19/the-us-military-security-complex-is-destroying-both-peace-and-the-us-economy/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.rt.com/news/503746-white-house-rejects-putin-start/>

^{iv} <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2020/11/17/us-navy-destroyer-shoots-down-an-icbm-in-milestone-test/>

^v Scott Ritter op-ed in RT (<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/507015-icbm-intercept-aegis-russia/>)

^{vi} Zia Mian, “Taking the nuclear ban treaty forward”, October 30, 2020,
<https://thebulletin.org/2020/10/taking-the-nuclear-ban-treaty-forward/>